

**NORTHERN DEALERS IN SLAVES.\***

When we entered upon the work of procuring freedom for two and a half millions of American slaves, it was in circumstances that called for a measure of the feeling expressed by one of old, who declared that he "conferred not with flesh and blood," and who could say, with reference to the solicitations of anxious friends as well as the threats of open enemies, "none of these things move me." We knew it would be a costly undertaking, and were prepared to go forward, cost what it might, of earthly good, knowing that it was a work secure of obtaining the favor of God.

We knew that the developement of the various connections with which slavery had fortified itself at the North, would produce excitement; and that the sword of truth could not reach the heart of slavery without

\* This appeared as an editorial article in the *Emancipator* of January 10, 1839. The *Boston Courier*, which has re-published it, calls it "an article respecting Northern Dealers in Slaves, which must turn the hair of the persons at whom it is aimed to wool, and change the hue of their skin to crimson, if not to ebony."

striking through many individuals, for whom respectable connections and high reputation both in church and state, would plead that they might be spared the pain and disgrace of exposure. But being satisfied that the great cause of humanity requires the sacrifice, we are impelled by a sense of duty, to lay open the entanglements in which our northern men are bound hand and foot, and tongue, as the vassals of slavery. And we wish it always to be borne in mind, that these disclosures are not made for the sake of wounding individuals, but to show the tendency of the system, and awaken our whole community to a conviction of the necessity of a united and effective movement to destroy the system itself, whose evil fruits are so various and so debasing. With this view, we call attention to the following business advertisement which came to us lately in the columns of one of our southern exchange papers:—

*From the Alabama Beacon, Dec. 13.*

**“PUBLIC SALE OF NEGROES.**

**“BY** Virtue of a deed of Trust made to me by Charles Whelan, for the benefit of J. W. & R. Leavitt, and of Lewis B. Brown, all of the city of New-York, which deed is on Record in Greene county, I shall sell at *Public Auction*, for cash, on the main street in the town of Greensborough, on Sat-

urday the 22d day of December next, a negro woman about thirty years old, and her child about eleven months old; a negro girl about ten years old, and a negro girl about eight years old.

WILLIAM TRAPP, Trustee.

" November 27, 1838. 176 3t."

Here is an assignment, made by Whelan, the slaveholding debtor in Alabama, of certain slaves, to the Leavitts and L. B. Brown, the merchant creditors in New-York, to be sold by them in default of payment of the debt due; and this assignment legally accepted by the creditors, and the sale ordered by them for their benefit.\* The intervention of Trapp as trustee is a mere matter of form, for convenience.

This case, therefore, differs somewhat from those cases in which a northern merchant sends his demand to a southern lawyer for collection, and the sheriff takes the human property of the debtor in execution, and sells it according to law. Although, in the latter case, we see not how the northern man can

\* It is understood the gentlemen freely admit that the arrangement was made the preceding year, by a Meeting agent sent out from this city, whose doings were approved by the principals, and the sale made under their direction; and that the transaction is justified by them, on pleas here pointed out.

exonerate himself from the crime of selling his brother; because he who does an act through another, does it himself, morally. And no man can properly send a demand to be collected in a slaveholding state, without giving positive orders to his agent or attorney, that slaves shall not be taken for payment, either by conveyance, trust, or execution. But in this case, the deed of trust is legally supposed to have been *accepted* by the creditors, for whose benefit it was made; and so the sale was necessarily made under their orders, given either by themselves or their *authorized* agent. The trustee, having no interest, could neither sell nor refuse to sell, but at the direction of the principals. It was, therefore, both in a legal and moral intent, a sale of slaves, on the 22d of December, 1838, by "J. W. & R. Leavitt and Lewis B. Brown, all of the city of New-York." As such, let us look at it a few moments, and endeavor to read its lessons.

Of one of the gentlemen named we know nothing personally. The others constitute one of the longest established firms in Pearl street, and may be properly referred to as a fair sample of New York merchants. And this is their mode of doing business. This is the course of the "southern trade," which has occasioned so much anxiety to secure it from the shocks of abolition. What these

gentlemen have not scrupled to do, and *to advertise in the newspapers*, probably the great body of New-York merchants would do just as readily and as openly. It is "the way business is done," it is "the course of trade," it is the process of "collecting southern debts," it is what our brothers and sons and neighbors do when they go to the South on "a collecting tour," it is the gathering in of the profits, the preparation for a full "account of stock" at the close of the year. It shows what we at the North have to do with slavery, and why we need to preach anti-slavery at the North. The moral sense of the whole nation is drugged to stupor by slavery. The body of New-York merchants would not send out agents to buy and sell women and children on the coast of Africa, but they do it in Alabama, without scruple or remorse, and put it in the newspapers too.

The gentlemen referred too are professing Christians, have a fair standing in the church, and bear a conspicuous part in supporting most of what are called "the great benevolent schemes of the day." Nor is it likely that they will lose either by this transaction, but will take their places at the communion table, and put the money into the contribution box which they received from this their "public sale of negroes" in Alabama, and meet in the boards and committees to which

they belong, to consult for the spread of the gospel, the reformation of mankind, and the conversion of the world, the same as before; all showing that they have only done as their neighbors would have done in like circumstances; or, in other words, that the general sentiment of the Christian community in this city countenances the selling of women and children in Alabama, by any whose interest requires it. It is this horribly depraved sentiment we have to reform; and it is for this end and not to wound or injure individuals, that we feel constrained by imperious duty to comment on the acts of individuals, as illustrative of the effects of a system.

But we must carry our remarks one step farther. Here we see a "**WOMAN** about thirty years old," to be sold at public auction, "for cash;" and of course she became the property of the highest bidder, whoever he might be and whatever his design or object in the purchase. The "cash" governs all and covers all. But this "woman" is also a mother, and "**HER CHILD** about eleven months old," is also on sale, and must go to the best bidder "for cash," whether the same that purchases the mother or not. Now, who gave Messrs. J. W. & R. Leavitt and L. B. Brown the right to take from this mother the child she bore with the pain of her own body, and sell it to a stranger "for cash?" There

is also a little "girl about ten years old," and another little "girl about eight years old," most likely the children of the same hapless parent, although the advertisement does not say so, for in the vocabulary of slavery, the ties of nature are of little account. In ancient times it was set down as one of the deepest crimes of a depraved people that they "*sold* the righteous for silver, and the *poor* for a pair of shoes," and "*sold a girl* for wine that they might drink." Yet our American Christians do much the same thing in effect; they sell women and children "for cash," and "sold a girl," and perhaps gave the money to the temperance society.

Let us bring this matter a little nearer home. The above-mentioned sale took place "on Saturday, the 22d day of December,"—Forefathers' Day! Did our common ancestor, who lived in Plymouth colony, though not on Plymouth rock, expect this to be the course of his descendants? One of the gentlemen, at least, is a husband and a father. And as this sale was effected "for cash" just before the holidays, we will imagine the avails of this "business transaction" just received, and specifically appropriated for the purchase of the customary new-year's presents in the family of a wealthy merchant. Let us then suppose the first glow of excitement over, the morning calls passed, the

admiration of numerous friends all duly paid, and the family circle at length quietly gathered by themselves in the ample parlor, to enjoy the domestic part of new-year's day. As the lady of the mansion looks around upon the new and costly embellishments which grace the room, she cannot suppress her admiration of the taste and kindness displayed in the purchase. "These are elegant articles, my dear husband, which you purchased with your Alabama money; in the present scarcity of money, you would not have felt able to spare so much but for that fortunate sale of the 'negro woman' and her children. How pleasant it is to us to have all our children together this evening, around our own happy fireside. I have thought several times to-day, of the slave woman who was sold, and her children taken from her, never to see her again, but I hope they have all found kind masters. Don't you suppose, my dear, that the stories told by the abolitionists are all false? You know our minister has been at the South, and was once a slaveholder himself, and must therefore know what slavery is; and he tells us that the slaves are a great deal better off than free people, and are the happiest creatures in the world. I do not see how a mother can be happy to have her children sold away. and especially the little babe of eleven months old, but they



must be used to it, you know. Well, after all, I am glad we do not have slaves here, for it does not seem quite right."

And then a little daughter takes up the story: "I thank you, dear papa, for this pretty doll you gave me to-day. Is she not a beauty? Such cherry cheeks and flowing locks, she does not look like that little black baby you sold in Alabama, does she? Papa, do little black children cry any, when they sell them and take them away from their mothers? Or, are they so used to it that they don't mind it at all? You would not let them sell *me*, would you, papa, for I am not black."

Let the young ladies now be seated at their music, and as the new instruments which were sent home last night give forth their exquisite tones, one says, "My dear father, you are very kind in providing us this elegant guitar and piano forte. But if you had not sold those two girls so well, you would have given us only common, low-priced things, such as every body uses. And now what shall we play to please our kind father? Shall we sing the Negro's Lament? It is very touching indeed. If it were any thing more than a song, I should almost think it was the words of that negro woman, talking to you, because you sold her two daughters. But you don't suppose negro women feel any thing of this, do you, father? I am sure I could never

take any pleasure in sitting by this elegant instrument, if I thought they had feelings, about being sold and separated. But I know my kind father would not sell them if it hurt their feelings.”\*

We will not finish the story, but leave every father, every mother, every daughter, who reads these lines, to place themselves in the stead of this mother and her daughters, from the time they were sold, “on Saturday, the 22d day of December,” at public auction,

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\* As some of our readers may not be familiar with this song, we publish the first two stanzas “with variations.”

“ Forc’d from home and all its pleasures,  
 [Greensb’ro’s] coast I left forlorn ;  
 To increase a stranger’s treasures,  
 O’er the raging billows borne.  
 Men from [Pearl-street] bought and sold me,  
 Paid my price in paltry gold ;  
 But though slave they have enroll’d me,  
 Minds are never to be sold.  
 Still in thought as free as ever  
 What are [Merchants’] rights I ask,  
 Me from my delights to sever,  
 Me to torture, me to task ?  
 Fleecy locks and black complexion  
 Cannot forfeit Nature’s claim ;  
 Skins may differ, but affection  
 Dwells in White and Black the same.”

“for cash,” on account of three citizens of New-York; and then, by a simple application of the Golden Rule, determine at once, whether it is right for northern Christian merchants to make their gains and collect their profits by such proceedings as this.

We append to the history of this mother and her “stolen daughters,” a touching piece from Whittier, which has not yet been set to music, and perhaps will not be, until the wealth which now patronises the fine arts among us shall be drawn from purer sources.

#### THE FAREWELL OF A VIRGINIA SLAVE

*To her daughters sold into southern bondage.*

Gone, gone—sold and gone,  
 To the rice-swamp dank and lone,  
 Where the slave-whip ceaseless swings,  
 Where the noisome insect stings,  
 Where the Fever Demon strews  
 Poison with the falling dews,  
 Where the sickly sunbeams glare  
 Through the hot and misty air,—  
 Gone, gone—sold and gone,  
 To the rice-swamp dank and lone,  
 From Virginia's hills and waters,—  
 Woe is me, my stolen daughters!

Gone, gone—sold and gone,  
 To the rice-swamp dank and lone,

There no mother's eye is near them,  
 There no mother's ear can hear them ;  
 Never, when the torturing lash  
 Seams their back with many a gash,  
 Shall a mother's kindness bless them,  
 Or a mother's arms caress them.

Gone, gone—sold and gone,  
 To the rice-swamp dank lone,  
 From Virginia's hills and waters,—  
 Woe is me, my stolen daughters !

Gone, gone—sold and gone,  
 To the rice-swamp dank and lone,  
 Oh, when weary, sad, and slow,  
 From the fields at night they go,  
 Faint with toil, and rack'd with pain,  
 To their cheerless homes again—  
 There no brother's voice shall greet them:  
 There no father's welcome meet them,  
 Gone, gone—sold and gone,  
 To the rice-swamp dank and lone,  
 From Virginia's hills and waters,—  
 Woe is me, my stolen daughters !

Gone, gone—sold and gone,  
 To the rice-swamp dank and lone,  
 From the tree whose shadow lay  
 On their childhood's place of play—  
 From the cool spring where they drank—  
 Rock and hill and rivulet bank—  
 From the solemn house of prayer,  
 And the holy counsels there—

Gone, gone—sold and gone,  
 'To the rice-swamp dank and lone,  
 From Virginia's hills and waters,—  
 Woe is me, my stolen daughters !

Gone, gone—sold and gone,  
 'To the rice-swamp dank and lone,  
 Toiling through the weary day,  
 And at night the Spoiler's prey,  
 Oh, that they had earlier died,  
 Sleeping calmly, side by side,  
 Where the tyrant's power is o'er,  
 And the fetters gail no more !

Gone, gone—sold and gone,  
 To the rice-swamp dank and lone,  
 From Virginia's hills and waters,—  
 Woe is me, my stolen daughters !

Gone, gone—sold and gone,  
 To the rice-swamp dank and lone.  
 By the holy love he beareth—  
 By the bruised reed he spareth—  
 Oh, may He, to whom alone  
 All their cruel wrongs are known,  
 Still their hope and refuge prove,  
 With a more than mother's love.

Gone, gone—sold and gone,  
 To the rice-swamp dank and lone,  
 From Virginia's hills and waters,—  
 Woe is me, my stolen daughters !

In giving this article the form of a tract, it is not the intention of the Committee to single out the individuals named in it, as worse than others, but to present them as a sample of their class, to show how extensively our commercial community, and even our churches, are bound to the interests and steeped in the guilt of **SLAVERY**. We have no means of ascertaining the extent to which this traffic is carried, in the way of mortgages and assignments; but we have reason to believe it is very great.

The method by levying on slaves in execution for the benefit of northern creditors is doubtless still more common, and still more remorseless in its cruelty. As a sample of its operation, we find in the *Alabama Beacon*, of July 26, 1838, an advertisement of the United States Marshall for the Southern District of Alabama, for a large sale of slaves to be made at the court-house in Erie, Greene county, on the first Monday in August, then next, on execution, by virtue of sundry writs of *fi. fa.* issued by the Circuit Court of the United States. Among them were several sales on "northern account." The following are for merchants and bankers in the city of New York.

"One negro man named Abraham, one Starling, one negro woman Maria and child, levied on as the property of David Flukes, to satisfy an ex' on in favor of H. & D. Parrish.

" One negro man named Isaac, one Frank, one Henry, one John, one Lewis, one boy named Elick, one girl named Jane, one Eliza, levied, &c. in favor of Thom. W. Lyon & Co.

" One negro man named Sam, one named Davy, one Peter, one John, one Harry, one James, one Phill, and one woman named Abby, &c. favor of J. & C. Gascoigne.

" One negro named Rant, one Paul, one Dublin, one Isham, one Bill, one Ben, one Richard, onewoman named Willy, one Fanny, one Rose, one Emeline, one girl named Willy, levied, in favor of Sam. St. John, Jr.

" One negro man named Peter, and one Tom, levied onas the property of E. F. Lyon, to satisfy anexecution in favor of J. D. Beers.

" One negro man named Tom, one Jim or Albert, one Frank, and one boy named Tom, one negro woman named Lindy, one Polly and child, one Caroline and two children, levied, &c. in favor of William E. Johnson."

At Mesopotamia on the 7th of August, 1838, one negro girl Lucindy, one bay horse, saddle, bridle, blanket and martingales, and a stock of goods, in favor of Warren Kimball.

It is by no means certain that Messrs. H. & D. Parrish, Thomas W. Lyon, J. & C. Gascoigne, Samuel St. John, Jr. John D. Beers, Warren Kimball, and William E. Johnson, knew that those men, women, and little girls and boys, were taken up by the

U. S. Marshall, at their instance, without any suspicion either of fault or debt of their own, or that they ever gave orders, personally, to have these innocent persons sold like cattle in order to put money into their pocket. But when they sent their demands to Alabama to be collected, yes, and when they trusted their goods to people in Alabama, **THEY KNEW** that this was the way it was very likely their debts would have to be collected. They are therefore just as much like kidnappers, as the man who allows, for gain or to save himself from loss, a mad beast to run at large in a crowded town, is like a murderer. The righteous God, in making laws for his ancient chosen people, has settled the question about intention, which has so often taxed the sophistry of modern apologists. He says, "If the ox **WERE WONT** to push with his horn in time past, and it hath been testified to his owner, and he **HATH NOT KEPT HIM IN**, but that he hath killed a man or a woman; the ox shall be stoned, and **HIS OWNER ALSO SHALL BE PUT TO DEATH.**" Surely, our men of business will find it better in the dying hour, to have kept their oxen at home, and their bills and notes and protested drafts in their own iron safes, than to send them where they will do such mischief to the innocent, as appears in these advertisements.